

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-8 and G-11 are related
July 13, 2021
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Michael Mena
Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.
Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias (Absent)
Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Planning and Zoning Director, Ramos Trias
Development Services Director, Suramy Cabrera

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz
Felix Pardo
Debra Register
Dr. Gordon Sokoloff
Tom O'Malley
Sue Kawalerski
William Arthur
Brett Gillis

Agenda Item F-8 and G-11 are related

F-8: A Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida issuing a Zoning in Progress, in accordance with Article 14 "Process," Section 14-209, "Moratorium," Section 14.209.3, "Zoning in Progress Request" and 14-209.4 "City Commission zoning in progress resolution review and decision," for the consideration of Zoning Code text amendments to address the

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incentives and/or bonuses provided in Section 5-200 of the Zoning Code “Mediterranean Standards,” for new commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family projects; providing that projects that received final approval by the Board of Architects shall not be subject to the Zoning in Progress; and providing for an effective date. (Sponsored by Commissioner Anderson)

G-11: Discussion regarding establishment of a Blue-Ribbon Committee of residents to investigate and provide suggestions re: Mediterranean Ordinance, the process for review and application of Mediterranean Ordinance, Board of Architects’ review of preliminary schematic drawings, and process for residents to provide comments, in writing, on projects before the Development Review Committee and Board of Architects. (Sponsored by Commissioner Anderson)

Mayor Lago: Let’s move onto F-8.

City Attorney Ramos: F-8 is a Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida issuing a Zoning in Progress, in accordance with Article 14 “Process,” Section 14-209, “Moratorium,” Section 14.209.3, “Zoning in Progress Request” and 14-209.4 “City Commission zoning in progress resolution review and decision,” for the consideration of Zoning Code text amendments to address the incentives and/or bonuses provided in Section 5-200 of the Zoning Code “Mediterranean Standards,” for new commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family projects; providing that projects that received final approval by the Board of Architects shall not be subject to the Zoning in Progress; and providing for an effective date. This is a public hearing item.

Mayor Lago: I’d also like to with Commissioner Anderson’s approval, take G-11 which is tied.

Commissioner Anderson: They are tied together, and I appreciate you doing that, and I appreciate this Commission’s willingness to have Sunshine meetings and the willingness to embrace this issue that has concerned so many residents. As I’m sure you all recall there had been Zoning in Progress ordinances like this that have been done historically to allow us to reexamine portions of the code, whether it be the Giralda Plaza or U.S.-1 corridor, it has been done in the past, and my vision is for this to be a short-term Zoning in Progress so that we can each one of us select an individual to be on a Blue Ribbon Committee to meet, beginning in August, to give us recommendations by September to begin to craft this into the revision of the Mediterranean code that we have been discussing. I do that there are a number of folks here that would like to speak on this item, so rather than belabor the discussion from us right now, I’d like to invite the residents up that have been waiting for a very long time to speak.

City Clerk Urquia: The first speaker is Ms. Maria Cruz.

Commissioner Anderson: We do have a little red light to remind people.

Ms. Cruz: It’s going to be very short.

Commissioner Anderson: Okay.

Ms. Cruz: I took the time to contact the city and I was able to get a report that I e-mailed all of you today, that showed all the projects that had gone in front of the Board of Architects from 2019 to the present. Now, remember the last year things were slow, okay. Fifty projects went before the Board of Architects and you all know I was a teacher; 50 projects, all of them were granted Mediterranean Bonuses. That's very hard to believe, very hard to understand, how every single project got bonus, and that's the issue that I see. I see that Mediterranean bonuses have become a rubber stamp, you ask for it, you get it, and that is a problem that we have. So this is why I started a petition, I got a whole lot of signatures and what we are saying is, we need to reign in the Mediterranean bonuses because otherwise whatever height, whatever density we set up is for nothing, because they come in and they ask for this, you know they put a little sign that says this is a Mediterranean building or a little print or a little art and they get what they want and they can build up and they can have more density. I think that's what the problem is and that's what the people are saying. We are not saying eliminate necessarily. We are saying examine, review, but in order to do that and based on the number of projects, and by the way, these were projects that have gone already to the board, some have been permitted, a few have not. If they haven't been permitted, they are still open for discussion. If they have already gotten a permit, there is nothing we can do, it's done, it's a done deal, okay. Now, there's plenty of projects come down, I mean, remember the Allen Morris project coming up. From what I read in the paper today or somehow, bought another property on Miracle Mile. All those projects are meant to be big buildings, and we need to do something before they go through the process because then it will be too late. So that is my take. I think we need to take control of density and height before it's too late for everybody.

Commissioner Fors: By the way, I just want to clarify, I stepped out to the restroom, but I listened to Commissioner Anderson's brief introduction as well as Maria Cruz' entire commentary on my phone, by the way.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Felix Pardo.

Mr. Pardo: Good evening Mayor, Commissioners and the public that's been patiently waiting for this particular item. I didn't know if we were going to continue the item at Burger Bob's for breakfast, but it really was amazing to see the great job that all of you do. I mean the amount of service that you provide is an asset that makes this city remarkable. I just wanted to also give you an observation that listening, sitting here for a few hours and listening to the different things that come up, it's amazing how many times compatibility issues come up, whether its noise, whether it's changing something that people are used to, like bike paths or driving golf carts. These are compatibility issues that we all live, we buy in and live and we raise our families here. Compatibility is really what makes us so different than, I think, just about every city. The gentleman that was the acoustics expert from Texas who's lived all over the place, he says this is a unique place. He's absolutely 100 percent right. The first time recently that I spoke with all of you at the meeting at the Police Station, I gave you a history of what the Mediterranean ordinance was about, how it came into play, and what it means and what it does. The citizenry, as you saw in the last election, they are very, very concerned with the development that they are now seeing for the first time built up. They are not happy and there is a reason for that. So, I'm going to read just a brief statement into the record and this statement is very clear. The Coral Gables Zoning

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*Agenda Items F-8 and G-11 are related – Resolution issuing a Zoning in Progress
In accordance with Article 14 "Process" Section 14-209 "Moratorium"*

Code has not been properly enforced to the letter and intent of the code, which allows for responsible and compatible development. Although the tools are there, if not used properly they are worthless. The biggest concerns expressed by the citizens of Coral Gables have to do with incompatibility of uses, scale, mass, height, and loss of architectural character. The charge and responsibility of the Board of Architects, the City Architect, the Developmental Review Committee, along with the Historic Preservation Department is to preserve the historical context of the quality of the life of this beautiful, planned city. The quality of the projects erected and approved recently in the last ten years are now seen by the public and it's difficult for the citizenry to swallow it. The two simple pages of Section 5-102 in the Zoning Code, gives the Board of Architects great power in black and white. Sub-section B states that the Board of Architects shall review each of the enumerated items, including architectural compatibility with neighboring properties and uses, building height, building scale, and mass, and finally, building façade step-backs, which are also specifically enumerated among 20 other items that the Board of Architects must review, must opine on. The City Architect also has the same authority and responsibility, but in all fairness, I have been told that the Board of Architects and the City Architect are instructed verbally that they cannot get involved in zoning matters, therefore minimizing their professional training to aesthetics only. We are now all paying the price because of this manipulation of code. In the Zoning Code Article 2, the Board of Architects shall have authority over the following performance standards which include compatibility with neighboring properties, site characteristics, design goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Keep in mind you have been told and I have heard it myself that we have to achieve whatever the Comprehensive Land Use Plan is. Keep in mind one thing are the uses, but it is a ceiling for what the zoning that underlies the Comprehensive Plan does. In other words, it's not a guarantee that you are going to develop or can develop to the maximum of that ceiling. There is tremendous history behind that and not for this evening. But I'll tell you right now that limiting building height, bulk, mass, and intensity of large-scale developments to promote compatibility with existing low-rise scale development as it presently exists for properties facing these areas is a direct quote from our code, your code. Although the DRC has similar responsibilities, the distortion of the code is irreversible for those projects that are already built. I have taken great personal offense at the dismantling of Merrick's jewel. I suggest for your reading and pleasure that you read the Coral Gables Historic City Plan Report that was adopted by the City Commission on June 21, 2018. The essence of Coral Gables in 61 brief pages. It should be required reading for all city employees and for all city board members since they are both important stewards of the City Beautiful. At the Sunshine meeting, I brought up the paint-by-numbers formula which has become a joke in exchange for additional FAR and height. I still believe that the Med bonuses should be revoked in its present form. Recently in a meeting with a very well-known developer, I looked at one of the walls in his lobby and he had an apartment building there and it said, it looks just like the apartment buildings that are located south of Bird Road and east of LeJeune Road in what used to be called the Old Industrial Section. The only difference between those projects that got Med bonuses and this particular project was it said underneath, Atlanta, Georgia, that was as Mediterranean as the ones that are built there now. Don't even get me started with the massive horrendous projects on U.S.-1. Some people say that there is a matter of right. I say there is a matter of wrong. There is no matter of right when it comes to bad design, bad judgement, bad planning. The moratorium – I am an architect by profession. For decades and decades and decades, I have met famous architects,

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passionate architects, great planners, sensitive planners. If it just doesn't feel right, it probably isn't, but the tool of the moratorium that you have in the Zoning Code is very important. The first sentence under Purpose and Applicability says, the purpose of providing for a moratorium on development is to preserve the status quo for a reasonable time while the city develops and adopts a land use strategy to respond to new or recently perceived problems. You all are really smart. You saw how people are so upset at the development that's there. It's not perceived. You could go out there and photograph it. The worst part about it is that many of these developments, although you've seen the structures go up, they are not full of people yet. We have developments where there is no place for them to go and enjoy open space. We have developments that are incompatible with the amount of parking that's going to be required because we've given them cross-parking agreements or we've taken them a little bit off the code because of shared use and other concepts that sometimes do work when you have great mass transit, but sometimes doesn't work when you don't have great mass transit. I implore you truly look at the possibility of providing a moratorium so we can get a handle on this before some of these projects continue and get built; and furthermore, it is outrageous to see the type of increase of height and feet, not just stories, but feet on these Mediterranean bonuses and FAR increases on these Mediterranean bonuses when they are given. Recently, I saw at the DRC meeting of May of this year and the public can see the two projects. There is a project on Segovia, which takes up a city block. There is a project in the Craft Section that was recently zoned by the Commission and when you see the two projects, if I would say to you, you could only give the Med bonuses to the design you like, I guarantee you I know which one that would be. And that's the problem. Check off the boxes, you get the bonuses, you get the additional height, you get the additional mass and because of the mass and because of the additional height, beyond the zoning and because of the additional FAR, there is no push and pull, there is no inflection, there is no movement. This beautiful building that we sit in that was in George Merrick's mind has a round rotunda to it. If we were applying the Med bonuses as used today, it would be a cube. There would be no colonnade. These are the little simple things that good architects can do, and I think that if we have the Board of Architects untie and do what they are supposed to do and are instructed properly and you have the proper people there and we listen to what they say, we will have better projects in the future, and I speak to you from experience. Thank you.

[Applause]

Mayor Lago: Thank you Mr. Pardo, I appreciate it. Before we get onto the next speaker, I need a motion from the Commission to go past 9 p.m.

Commissioner Menendez: I'll make the motion.

Commissioner Fors: Second.

Mayor Lago: That's part of the legislation that we wrote.

City Attorney Ramos: It's in the City Code actually.

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Vice Mayor Mena: Okay. I wasn't aware of that.

Commissioner Menendez: How far pass 9?

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, can we get a vote?

City Clerk Urquia: All in favor?

All: Aye.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Pardo thank you, by the way, I just wanted to make sure we met the two-minute timeline.

Vice Mayor Mena: Very briefly, not on the item before us, but just on one aspect of what Mr. Pardo said. I'd like to ask the City Attorney if he's amenable, which I think he is, to please meet with Mr. Pardo and I'd like an analysis into the point he's making about the Board of Architects, their powers under the code and how those are being implemented in practice. I had a long conversation with Mr. Pardo, I don't remember now if it was yesterday or Friday, but in the last few days, and I think he has some interesting points to make.

City Attorney Ramos: Happy to.

Vice Mayor Mena: And I think it would be a productive exercise regardless of what is decided here today.

Mayor Lago: Vice Mayor you kind of beat me to it, because I'll be presenting a pocket item that I have, a resolution which is asking for the Commission to allow me to assemble a body of seven engaged citizens to serve on a temporary board for the limited purpose of facilitating the Mayor's Strategic Priorities Plan and providing periodic updates to the City Commission. I was going to ask Mr. Pardo to be one of the seven members. So I need that update in a memo format to the Commission and I'm sorry to give you more work, but it's something that I think we need to formally memorialize so that we can have it as a document that basically clearly shows your concerns and how we can be a better city, not only in regards to the overall aspect of the city and the aesthetics, but to the design and the projects that are forthcoming to the city. So, I'm going to be presenting this later at the end of the Commission, so it's something I was going to bring to your attention.

Vice Mayor Mena: And just to be clear, its less about Med bonus, which is the topic for discussion here and from the workshop, but very specific to your point about Board of Architects roll is supposed to be and how it's being implemented in practice. I think that has implications beyond just the Med bonus discussion. That's the idea.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

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City Clerk Urquia: Ms. Debra Register.

Ms. Register: I am Debbie Register; I live at 1240 Placetas Avenue. I really don't have much more to say, he said it all, but I do have one thing. It's when you do issue these permits, is that there are different projects and I'll talk about Venera. Venera has a Phase I and a Phase II; Phase II property was supposed to be incorporated in Venera Project. That property is now up for sale, and I don't know if you all know that, and its saying investment opportunity. So, what is the city going to do, okay, because that specific project had that specific piece of property incorporated with the sole use of parking within Venera. So, will Venera get a CO when they complete theirs and Phase II hasn't even begun?

Vice Mayor Mena: I think I know what you are saying, I just want to make sure I'm clear. You are referring to the Lowell Realty Building that was next-door.

Ms. Register: Yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: And when it was approved it was said that the parking would need to exist in Phase I.

Ms. Register: In Venera – right. And Commissioner Keon at the time was very concerned about that one piece of property, and so, right now its Phase II. Phase II could start in ten years.

Vice Mayor Mena: Or never.

Ms. Register: Or never, but they've gotten their project. So Phase I was approved, so to us as residents that like pulling the wool over our eyes, because you know, you all approved it and at the time I remember being at a Planning and Zoning and it was specifically brought up that maybe they should look at that project as two separate projects, and it was agreed that it would be one, but that that would be incorporated, because the whole thing was being redone. So, I just want to know that the city is on top of projects like this.

Vice Mayor Mena: That's a good point. Phase I should have enough parking to meet its parking requirement and to have the parking allocated for the Phase II building, whether or not that Phase II building happens, doesn't happen, but even if its separated and for the City Attorney, I would ask for confirmation of this. I'm assuming that I don't know how you effectuate it, but is it like some sort of covenant that requires Phase I to provide those spaces to the Phase II building?

City Attorney Ramos: That was a parking covenant, if I remember correctly, it was amended. I haven't looked at this in a while. Recently, somebody asked a question.

Vice Mayor Mena: But just given Ms. Register's concerns, can you please have somebody look at that and just confirm for her that one, Phase I has the parking spaces that were required for the Phase II building, if and when its built, and two, that if and when its built, there is some sort of covenant that requires Phase I to park the cars for Phase II.

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Ms. Register: Our concern is that they are going to give a CO to Phase I and Phase II will never be built. That's the residents in our area are very concerned about that and I as a business owner in that area is very concerned, because you have developers that are presenting a plan to you and then do not fulfill that plan because they might...

Vice Mayor Mena: Phase I should get a CO – Phase I should get a CO but they must have the parking spaces for the Phase II.

Ms. Register: Okay.

Vice Mayor Mena: And they must have a covenant in place that those parking spaces are available to the Phase II the Lowell Realty Building. So, they definitely have to meet those requirements, but certainly can't withhold the CO if they did other things that they were required to do, which are build the spaces and provide a covenant for that building to park there.

Ms. Register: Okay. It just was presented to the residents when it was approved, so its deceiving to us what happened during that meeting.

Commissioner Anderson: I think the concern is that Phase II is never built and then a different plan comes in, is that covenant going to carry to a different plan if Phase II is not built.

Vice Mayor Mena: I think the covenant runs with the property and should, assuming it was done correctly, that I can't confirm for you, but the idea was that yes, the covenant runs with the land and is to the benefit of the Lowell Realty Property.

Assistant City Attorney Ceballos: Regardless of what gets built in Phase II property, it would need to meet the parking requirements whether that's because of the covenant that exists with Phase I or whether they have to build their own onsite, they would still have to meet the parking requirements.

Vice Mayor Mena: Which they would never be able to do, that site is very small.

Assistant City Attorney Ceballos: Correct. So, it would have to be...

Vice Mayor Mena: The reason why that they were put into that because there is no way that the Lowell Realty Building can build parking and anything there.

Assistant City Attorney Ceballos: Yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: Let's confirm that for Ms. Register so that she has the peace of mind that it's done that way.

City Attorney Ramos: We'll look into for sure.

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City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Dr. Gordon Sokoloff.

Dr. Sokoloff: Well, besides the acoustics, I think for these meetings go on this long, you should have a coffee bar there and an alcohol bar there.

Commissioner Menendez: I'll make the motion.

Vice Mayor Mena: I'll second it, okay.

[Laughter]

Dr. Sokoloff: If we survive.

Commissioner Anderson: You have to expand the Freebie service.

Dr. Sokoloff: I'm going to come at this a little bit differently. As Mr. Pardo was so eloquent, I come with the same conviction as born and raised resident here my entire life and fifth generation in the Gables, living down here. I'm coming at you all so as a board member and as a previous board chairman. If any of us are driving, any of us are driving in the streets and any police officer sees us speeding, no matter who we are, we are going to get pulled over and most likely ticketed, and that's a servant to the city, the police force that works for us. Similarly, the firemen will treat us all the same, and that's the way it should be, but there is a difference with the staff that works in City Hall and the staff treats homeowners differently than they do developers, and I don't want to offend anybody, because I know many of the staff members and many of them are nice people, but its easily recognized that developers develop relationships here. They all know them, they are here all the time, right – Allen Morris, Terra Nova, MG Developers, they are here daily. They mix and mingle with the staff, I'm sure, because they are constantly building projects. Whereas homeowners they come here to do a pool, or a roof, it's one and done, and the staff doesn't get to know those people. So, to me, the problem really boils down to the staff, and I can say that as a board chairman, because I found that the staff was trying to push through the bike lane agenda through my board and they were trying to funnel it through. I stuck up for the residents that came during the turbulent bike lane issue. It was under my watch, and it wasn't fun, but I ultimately stuck up for the residents because they needed to be heard and listened to and that's what I found to be the core of the issue at that time. I've said before in certain editorials that you have to look no further than the Florida Keys to see a community, the Keys, all of those communities that have their codes and they adhere to them, and you are not going to drive down there and see anything building over four stories, because it is the Keys. The Gables have lost its way long time ago, and I hear it all the time – The Gables, man the Gables, believe it I love it here, but I hear it, the Gables lost its way, all that development. I believe that the staff at the entry gate needs to be told not to let in these developers who come in with such egregious plans like Allen Morris' approaching in a zone for seven stories, he's approaching with a 16-story building. Well, if it was a resident coming in to build a five-story house, he'd be laughed at and told, shown the door, sir, Dr. Sokoloff come back when you have a three-story plan, that's our height limit in the Gables, and that's what

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should be done. During some of the debates I asked some of you what would happen, you know, if the developers were treated the same way, would you be willing to enforce a level playing field where you treated them the same way that the residents get treated and I believe that at the DRC, the Development Review Committee, when these guys come in with their plans, they are not only not turned away, but they are shown the way. Well, let's see if we can work with the parking, let's see if we can give you remote parking, let's see if we can give you one kind of allowance or another. So, I would like to see you tighten up the enforcement. I'm in favor of this moratorium, so you can step back. With all due respect to the city staff, the staff is not enforcing what the people want and the people elect you and you're supposed to represent what we want ideally, and that's why I serve on a board, and I love doing it, because I feel like I can help bridge that communication. I'm asking you now to really try to consider that, if you tighten up the staff and you let the staff reflect you and you ideally are reflecting us, you can stop this over development at the entry gate, which is at the Development Review Committee. Thank you.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: With permission of the Chair. Dr. Sokoloff, there is a civility code that is in place that governs our proceedings here.

Dr. Sokoloff: Yes.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: I submit to you that if you have any specific cases where the staff has done anything that is improper that you, please bring it to my attention.

Dr. Sokoloff: I've done it before and you actually fired somebody that worked on the Transportation Board, so yes, I've done it before and I'll continue to do that, but remember you shook my hand. But I will say this to you, Assistant City Manager, when someone does something wrong you need to be able to call them out and say, not say what you said to me about someone else, I protect my staff. Your job is to manage the staff, not protect them. The staff works for us, they get paid with our tax dollars, and your job is to manage them, not protect them.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: And that is precisely what I'm doing, sir, I'm managing the staff.

Dr. Sokoloff: We'll talk. Thank you.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: Dr. Sokoloff, thank you very much. I appreciate your words. Thank you.

Dr. Sokoloff: Thank you. Mr. Clerk, next.

City Clerk Urquia: John Fisher.

Mr. Fisher: [Inaudible – off mic]...John Fisher will pass...

Mayor Lago: Thank you Mr. Fisher.

City Clerk Urquia: Tom O'Malley.

Mr. O'Malley: I've got two quick comments. As a former Marine I always like going to Burger Bob's and seeing the Marine Core flag, and it just so happens that this afternoon with two friends. We enjoyed bacon cheeseburgers at Burger Bob's, so I didn't know that was going to be a conversation tonight, but I enjoyed that very much, so three cheers for Burger Bob's. And also, Mr. Mayor, thank you very much for your comments about your brother. It's incredibly important that the city, the Commission, everybody works in an atmosphere where the perception, there is no perception of a conflict of interest, and you manifested that, so thank you very much.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Mr. O'Malley: I don't know if this is appropriate or not, but I have handouts.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Give them to the Clerk or whatever you'd like.

Commissioner Anderson: We appreciate your preparation.

Mr. O'Malley: My wife wonders what I do all day and I just – she thinks I spend all day in the office on the computer. Speakers before me brought up a number of different things about what's going on with Coral Gables, going on in Planning and Zoning, and had said previously at the Sunshine meeting that I got involved with this zoning as a result of I thought we agreed to four stories in the Craft Section and all of a sudden, I see six stories. So, I started to get more involved in what was going on. So, I started sending messages to the city e-mails, and I sent it to Ms. Cabrera and to Mr. Cejas, and I got a reply from Mr. Cejas, and he bucked it down to Mr. Trias, who did respond to me once and then I got bucked down to Arceli, I don't know her last name, Arceli, and I had some communication with her, and then as my questions continued, I didn't get any answers anymore. So, then I decided to do a little bit more investigating into the questions I had, since I wasn't getting the response, I thought I should be getting from the city. So, the first thing I have – I have eight pages here. The first two pages were provided to me by Ramon Trias as a result of some questions I asked and he was very good at responding to me, so thank you Mr. Trias. The second two pages are highlighted in yellow, I don't want to say corrections, because I'm not an expert in this stuff, but I detected that there were some things that weren't quite right, so I highlighted them; and the next four pages are my discussion items about each of those four items, each of those four pages, so you can see my thought process. So, in the first two pages, I want to bring up just one thing, under Med Bonus Two, the city allows six stories proposed is seven. I agree with Gordon Sokoloff, I agree with Mr. Pardo, the developer should have been shown the door, shown the door. You are allowed six, don't come in with seven. When you come back with six, come on back in. So that's all I want to say about that first page.

Vice Mayor Mena: What development is this, I apologize.

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Mr. O'Malley: I'm sorry, this is Alexian Crafts.

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay.

Mr. O'Malley: So, I go to the third page and the reason for my investigation or research is, I went to the presentation that the developer made at the Development Review Committee. I went to page A-1.03, and I looked at the property line of the development proposed by Alexian, and when I compute the square footage of the property line it becomes 78,390 square feet. Whereas this document shows a proposal of 91,000. So, my question is, what happened? Their document says its 78,000 and then it gets bumped up to 91,000. So, I didn't get an answer to that. So, then I keep going. If you look down at page 3, the third paragraph, it says density. I'm sorry, if we go to the second one, the second one it talks about how many acres. So, 78,000 square feet is 1.798 acres. If we go to density, it says the requirement is 125 units per acre, which would yield 264 units. Alexian Crafts is proposing 263. So, in the service we say, hey this is great, it's one under the requirement, but the fact is, if the building footprint is 78,000 feet, they only allowed 223. So now we have this problem of, 78,000 versus 91,000 feet is a net difference of 30 units of construction of apartments for Alexian projects. I'd like somebody to answer that, not now, not right now, but at some point, somebody's got to say, why does this difference exist?

Vice Mayor Mena: Did you discuss that with Mr. Trias or no?

Mr. O'Malley: After Trias sent me the message, I got bumped down to Arceli and after one communication, I didn't get any more responses. So, the second thing, Mayor Lago, I know how important open space, not open space, landscape open spaces, and on the same presentation by Alexian, page A-1.02, it talks about a 4,000 square foot public park, except the public park there has got a fence going through it, and the fence separates the public park to the private property. So, this 4,000 square foot public park that they are supposed to build is only like 2,200 square feet, that's not right. So other people have spoken about, Ms. Register spoke about it, sometimes it seems that there are projects in the works and the city is told the project is going to look like "X", and when it's done it looks like "Y", and somewhere the changes are made and somebody should be checking and verifying, qualifying and approving every step of the way, and I looked at this park and I said, there is not going to be a 4,000 square foot park, there is a fence there. Somebody should look at that. Then I looked at, this is supposed to be 16,000 square feet of landscape open space for this project. There is no designation for 16,000 square feet on the proposal from Alexian Projects and if there is, I'd like somebody again to show me that. At the bottom of the page, it talks about step-backs and the city requires 10, and the Alexian Project has got 10, 15, 10, 10, 15, etc. But if you look at the renderings, there is no step-back. However, created those renderings gets my applause, because the beautiful renderings are illusionary. There is no step-back. So, if somebody wants to see what a step-back looks like they should go over to Altara where there is a number of apartment projects there where there's verifiable step-backs. So, somebody should look at that. The next is the parking. Supposed to be 377 parking spaces, 22 and 22 for live-work and the rest for residential. Somewhere along the line the city allowed a shared parking program and mitigated 20 parking spaces. I don't understand that. In every discussion we've had about buildings, parking is an issue. I believe it's going to be an issue here. And the thing I see on the plans it says, there's

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going to be parking in the development for electric vehicles and parking for handicap, but you can't allocate handicap parking spots, they are supposed to be for whosever handicapped. So, if I live on the 5th floor and there is "X" amount of parking spots on the 5th floor, who gets the handicap spot?

Mayor Lago: I understand what you're saying. You've made significant points on the fact that on this project, which by the way, has not come before us yet.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: I believe it's just at DRC, so this is just a glimmer in someone's eye right now.

Mr. O'Malley: Just one more quick point.

Mayor Lago: Listen, its 9:30 (p.m.), you can be as long as you want, but there comes a point where we become ineffective, in my opinion.

Mr. O'Malley: I get that.

Mayor Lago: I just want to be honest with you. We have an incredibly long, very, very long, just one second, Mr. Manager, we are going to have to probably move a lot of the agenda. Let's be upfront, let's just do it now, we've got staff here, pass 11 o'clock, what's the point, pass 12, 1, what are we going to do?

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: It's at the will of the Commission, sir.

Mayor Lago: I just want to make sure we put it on the table now, let's listen to this item, let's address the other pertinent issues. I want to be effective. I don't want to just run through things and let's take note of what happened here today. So, when we have to do this in August again, because there is only one Commission meeting in August, so this will happen again. We are going to have to push things to the following meeting, especially maybe some of the protocol items.

Commissioner Fors: My three items I'll push.

Mayor Lago: No, no, no, I'm saying I have to push my items too. Go ahead.

Mr. O'Malley: Thank you Mr. Mayor. My last item is that the parking spaces are allocated to this building to be 8 and-a-half (8 ½) feet wide. I measured parking spaces in various places in the city, they are usually 10 feet wide. Here at Coral Gables City Hall, they are 9 to 9 ½ feet wide, in this proposal its 8 ½ feet wide. Most of the parking, except for Coral Gables City Hall is angle parking at 10 feet, it's very easy to have ingress and egress to a vehicle, 8 ½ feet not so much. When you are handicap, very difficult, and if the plan goes forward to where they are going to place the parking for the handicap, handicap is not going to be able to get in and out of vehicles because the parking for handicap is up against the walls. Plus, anybody who is driving a Navigator, or an

Expedition, or a Camaro or a Mustang it's not going to be able to open the doors. My whole point of this is, there are a lot of things that, I'm sure there is more...

Mayor Lago: Before you move on, I want to talk about that. So, the code, obviously the code in regard to parking and there is a minimum standard.

Vice Mayor Mena: Federal requirements too.

Commissioner Anderson: For handicap, yes, there is absolutely a federal requirement, but then there is the issue of some of us are thinner and some of us are wider, getting in and out of vehicles, but the point, go ahead Mayor.

Mayor Lago: So, my point was, that's something we need to study and obviously the smaller the parking space, the more parking you can fit on each one of the footprints on each one of the floors. So, I understand what you are inferring in regard to the fact that they are trying to find as many ways to address issues and they have to reach a certain height, to fill all their FAR, to fill their square footage and their tensity and density.

Mr. O'Malley: Yes sir.

Mayor Lago: So that's another item that I'd like for Mr. Trias to address, not now, obviously, but when it does come before us.

Mr. O'Malley: So, in conclusion, I think there are some answers that have to be provided with regards my understanding of this project and I'd appreciate talking to whomever, and I'd be happy to report back to you in 30 days, if you'd like, and the other is, I think the Mediterranean bonus needs to go away. I am absolutely in favor of Commissioner Anderson's proposal, and I hope you guys, everyone votes in favor of it. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

Commissioner Anderson: Just to clarify for everybody. This is not a vote to make the Mediterranean bonus go away. This is a vote to let's study it and let's improve it, and take a pause for four months, 120 days, have it finished and done with by December.

City Clerk Urquia: The next speaker is...

Mayor Lago: Before we move on Mr. Clerk, I'd like to have Ramon Trias come up and at least give us a quick synopsis.

Vice Mayor Mena: On this project?

Mayor Lago: Some of the responses.

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Vice Mayor Mena: But on the project, because the item before us is not about that project.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: No, it's not, and I want to clarify that the comments were made and thank you very much, by the way, that was a great analysis of the project, but it was at DRC. This project has not even gone to Board of Architects, it hasn't gone to Planning and Zoning, it hasn't gone before you. I recommended that Arceli talk to him because Arceli was the one doing the actual review, so she knew more about it than I did. Certainly, the best staff person that we had at the time tried to give all the information, but I want to emphasize, DRC, Board of Architects, Planning and Zoning, Commission, all of it was staff review, so all of that has to happen and happens every time.

Vice Mayor Mena: Please make yourself available to meet with the gentleman.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Absolutely.

Vice Mayor Mena: Address his questions. I think he has gone through a lot of work here and I think it's fair enough to give him the interest...and then it's going to keep going through that process and we'll address it as it does, obviously, but please take the time to go over it with him at the appropriate time that he's available.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Sure. Any other questions. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, please move on. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Absolutely. Next speaker is Irina Dumitrescu.

Ms. Dumitrescu: Thank you so much for staying up so late, I don't even know what time it is. I want to say, I'm a new resident of Coral Gables, we moved here about four years ago, so I'm probably a novelty in this room. We bought the house right before Hurricane Irma, one month before, lucky us. So, it was a nice welcome to Miami, to Coral Gables, we moved actually from out of state, we came here, nice welcome. We did some renovations. We were here talking to the Board of Architects a lot. We wanted to put, among other things, one roll down shutter in front of our old front door, safety, Irma had just passed, and we were told we couldn't do that because that would have been like a wart on the face of our house. At the time we were pretty upset because safety, but we were at the same time very much reassured that keeping the community the way it was, that keeping the look the same, keeping everything beautiful was important to the city. So, we accepted that, and we were happy that we are living in that community. And then U.S.-1 and Grand Avenue happened just now. I mean that is a complex that is so out of sync with what's around it, that it's scary. So, what I ask you is, to please say yes to this timeout. I know that you all want to do the right thing by us, and you all want to improve the city and not let it be destroyed. Just take this time off, you are going to do research and look into the changes anyway, just don't let other buildings happen during this time. So please say yes. Thank you.

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you.

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City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Mr. Enrique Bernal.

Mr. Bernal: Good evening again and thank you for your patients. I think that one of the great things that is happening in the city is that we get the sense that you are listening and that was missing for the last several years. Let me start with that. I'm here really to support the proposal for the moratorium redevelopment and as I listen to all of the frustrations of my fellow residents, I have in a different view, I really think that the complaints about the city staff are really a result of frustration from the residents that the Commission has not created the proper manner for residents to be able to communicate with the city staff. The city staff is dealing on a daily basis with developers, with attorneys, with lobbyists, and everything else, and those people understand the language of the city staff, so there is a level of comfort that is going to happen naturally and that is going to lead to sympathy for the excitement of the changes to the city. I believe that a healthy tension between developers and residents is the best possible situation. I really think that the thing is that we don't have a level playing field, and it's the Commission really that needs to set the ground rules for the playing field. I'm going to relay to you my experience that I'm pretty bitter about and it tells me the disconnect that I have with the city staff and it's this. I volunteer on boards here, I try to do everything, I listen, I read everything that comes from the city, but in spite of the fact that the city staff says that they have one and-a-half years of planning in this, so-called, zoning update, I was blindsided by the fact that Valencia Avenue 700 Block and also the 500 Block of Valencia Avenue, which is the Biltmore Section, a residential area, all of a sudden was granted a Mediterranean bonus to go up 40 feet more, so now in front of our building at 718 Valencia, the developers have been given a property right to have a Mediterranean bonus of 40.4 feet, that's the tallest in the city. Now, I have been analyzing this and engaging with the city staff and the City Attorney and the City Clerk and everybody else, trying to make the case about how this could happen, and we never knew anything about it. There was no communication about it. We had gone through a series of communication of meetings and everything else, and the bottom line is that the city says that they communicate. Well, my interpretation is the city goes and puts it into Business Daily or the venues that are familiar to the attorneys and the developers and everything else, but that's not where the residents read. Now we have made certain investments in our IT infrastructure, I just verified it with the head of the IT, the Director of IT. Whenever there is going to be a discussion on zoning projects or anything, our IT infrastructure has the capability of immediately identifying who are the people that are going to be affected and send e-mails or registered mail or whatever, and the point is, it's not happening. We feel that it's really the Commission's responsibility that you have to take time out to set the rules for communications that will reduce the distrust that exist now between residents, the Commission, the city staff, the developers, everybody, because a level playing field should be that if a developer wants to propose anything that is not exactly according to code, all the people affected in the very first discussion should be informed so that they can participate. There is no excuse for the fact that I'm uncomfortable because these people don't understand the zoning code. Well, if their neighborhood is going to be affected, they need to be in on it. After a developer spends several million dollars talking to city staff for a year and has a full plan and everything else and it's loaded with lawyers, there is no way to stop that thing. The only way to get the level playing field is to be aware of it before the money spent and the commitments are made. That's what I plead with the Commission, please grant this

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moratorium so that you can say the ground rules for the level playing field which don't exist today. The playing field is totally lopsided and its showing in the distrust that we have in the community. So, thank you for your time.

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you Mr. Bernal.

[Applause]

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Ms. Sue Kawalerski.

Commissioner Fors: Mr. Bernal, while Ms. Kawalerski comes up, you can stay there, Sue you can come up. I met with you on Biltmore Way, and you mentioned that idea about the geographic based...

Mr. Bernal: And I noticed that you have an item here that I want to support, so please, in any way that I can help, I would love to. We made the investment, we have the means, but it takes the will of the Commission to say, let's make the rules so that we can trust each other.

Commissioner Fors: I just wanted to let you know that you inspired that idea, based on that meeting and it will be pushed to August now, but we are working on it.

Mr. Bernal: Thank you very much. I really appreciate that, and I want to stay up.

Commissioner Fors: Thank you.

Commissioner Anderson: It's a good idea.

Commissioner Fors: It is.

Ms. Kawalerski: Good evening again, I'm Sue Kawalerski, 6830 Gratian Street and tonight I'm representing the Coral Gables Neighbors Association, many of whom you've heard from tonight. I think possibly the Commission at one point thought it was me and Cruz and Sokoloff and a couple of us, and I have to say that it is many, many residents across Coral Gables who are now stirred up to the point where they are contacting me and I know they are contacting you, because they send me copies of e-mails, they send to you. This development issue has, I guess, in a way the Paseo de la Riviera was possibly a good thing, because it all of a sudden exposed what exactly everybody here was approving and then it got compounded by Gables Station and then the Plaza, these out of scale, the Venera, on and on and on. I've become almost like an expert. I don't want to be an expert on FAR, and PAD and all this, and I've had to become an expert because we couldn't figure what you guys were doing, but we can figure it out now. I think we know what's happening and I think Commissioner Anderson in moving forward this pause on the Mediterranean bonus, and I have to give you also credit, Vice Mayor, because you did mention your concerns about the Med bonus about a year ago, maybe longer. I think this is a really important first step and I think it's only a first step. I think it's a first step in finally including residents in this process

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by putting a pause and asking residents what we think the Mediterranean bonus should look like, maybe not the nine criteria that Mr. Trias, whether eight or nine that they have to come up with in order to qualify for a Med bonus, but allow the residents to help you figure out what that should look like or if we should have a Med bonus at all. I think that Sunshine meeting produced three great ideas from three great residents, three great ideas; and one of them was putting the pause and redefining what Med bonus really means. And so, please consider this resolution, both resolutions actually, the first resolution for the pause and the second resolution for the Blue Panel, Blue Ribbon Panel, I think they go hand-in-hand, because the Blue-Ribbon Panel, according to the resolution will include residents, that's a great thing. Again, it's a great first step and I encourage you on behalf of all, and I have to say, my e-mails reach over 16,000 people, they are residents in Coral Gables, 16,000 residents, okay, and unfortunately, I have to answer their e-mails, unfortunately because I don't have a lot of time, but fortunately because it's so refreshing seeing residents who are interested in what's going on and want to make sure that they had a say. So for all of you listening on Zoom and for the Irina's of the world, and the Mr. Pardo's of the world, and oh my God, Enrique, and everybody here, let along on Zoom and that are waiting for my next newsletter to let them know what's going to go on, thank you all residents for making this happen, because I don't think without the residents asking for this, this probably wouldn't have happened. So please include us and respect us. Thank you.

[Applause]

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Ms. Michelle Dunaj.

Unknown Speaker: She left.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay, and the last card I have, Mr. Mayor is Mr. William Arthur.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Arthur, good evening.

Mr. Arthur: Good evening, how are you?

Mayor Lago: The floor is yours.

Mr. Arthur: William Arthur, 2920 Ponce de Leon Boulevard. A couple of you don't know, I'm a third-generation architect to Coral Gables. I think my grandfather started practicing here in 1949. I'm here to support the moratorium. Now is the perfect time for a moratorium. September 1st, we are starting a new online permitting system through Development Services, and we have a new City Architect. It's a great time for a moratorium, we don't need to argue about the details, we just need to approve it. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor that's it for public speakers. I did receive certain e-mails from residents that wanted to have them read into the record.

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Mayor Lago: Perfect.

City Clerk Urquia: So, the first e-mail is from Ms. Wendy Cook, “Good afternoon Mayor Lago and Commissioners, I’m submitting this e-mail as a part of resolution item F-8. The city needs to reassess the Zoning Code Text Amendments to address the incentives and our bonuses provided in Section 5-200 of the Zoning Code, Mediterranean Standards, for new commercial mixed-use and multi-family projects. Buildings should come to Coral Gables with magnificent plans, developers should not be given bonuses for beautiful architectural design. Rather beautiful architectural design should be the norm; green spaces visible to the public should be the norm; setbacks should be the norm; building height restrictions should be the norm; traffic calming should be the norm; sufficient parking should be the norm; electric car stations should be the norm; sustainability should be the norm; contributions to art in public places should be the norm. A massive square building with a small copula on the top of a few arch windows should not be acceptable. This bonus structure has been a skewed and needs to be reassessed before it is too late for our City Beautiful.” The next one is from Mr. Jose Rohiedy. It says, “Dear Mayor Lago and City Commissioners, I write this letter to you today in support of Commissioner Rhonda Anderson’s resolution to place a temporary moratorium on development applications that count on the Mediterranean bonus to build taller buildings. As we have seen over the last several years, such bonuses have been used as a loophole by developers and cozy government officials alike, to turn the City Beautiful from a small city with a low skyline into a small city inundated with a mishmash of tall buildings that do not compliment the city’s original feel as envisioned by our founder George Merrick. Why is a temporary moratorium necessary under these circumstances? Simple – because the city needs to effectuate a true plan that is in line with the residents’ desires to best determine what the city will look like going forward, as well as to hold developers accountable before allowing them to build within our confines. A temporary moratorium is the only practicable way in which both tenants can be properly achieved. As it stands, far too many loopholes exist for developers to wreak havoc on our city, as well as the quality of life for its residents, including but not limited to the following: the Zoning Code, Land Use Designation Map, Comprehensive Plan, the Mediterranean Bonus as issued herein, Planned Area Development, Floor Area Ratio, as well as overlays which are frequently manipulated by developers to have their proverbial cake and eat it too. Where have these transgressions lead to? Essentially, a hodge-podge of architectural aberrations as well as building height, and population density issues that are far from harmonious with the neighborhoods they occupy. Today, we are a city that is at a crossroads, given that we are essentially confused about our true historical heritage, as well as how to honor and commit to it. We have a troika of new leaders at the helm in the city. It is my hope that we continue to distance ourselves from the last administration and its wrongdoings, especially of putting the interest of developers ahead of those of residents. Let’s get back to doing what is right and serving the same people who put the Mayor and City Commissioners in office, the residents. Placing a temporary moratorium on development applications that count on the Mediterranean bonus to build taller buildings is a good start.” We have an additional e-mail here, “The bar of new buildings being considered Mediterranean is so low as to almost meaningless. As more of these high-rises are completed it is becoming apparent, sadly, that Coral Gables is already well on its way to becoming Brickell 2.0. The two terms of Valdes-Fauli’s administration will forever be

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remembered for its apathy to citizens' concerns and its embrace of commercial real estate developers. Maybe we need a referendum in the next election that calls for a moratorium on all new commercial construction in Coral Gables. It seems that nothing is changing, so maybe a different approach is needed to achieve the desired result. The single-family residential character of the city is losing ground and IMHO, the quality of live in our neighborhoods has already been negatively affected. Everyday there is more spillover traffic, more noise from the major roads and parking that is scarce and incredibly expensive, assuming you can find it. It used to be that a quarter would buy you enough time on the parking meter to dash into the drycleaner or the Post Office, not anymore. Now it's all done via Pay-by-phone and the minimum charge for 30 minutes is almost \$2. As a result, I think twice before going into our downtown area. My wife and I have begun doing our weekend shopping outside of the city and increasingly we are going to quieter neighborhoods for lunch or dinner. Alaine's Osteria in Palmetto Bay is as good as any restaurant in our city and the parking is free. I would love nothing more for this Commission to prove me wrong on all of this, but I'm not holding my breath, Raul Mas". That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, that's it.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes sir.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Anderson the floor is yours.

Commissioner Anderson: I've limited this Zoning in Progress resolution to just the commercial projects, mixed-use projects and multi-family projects that are seeking a Med bonus that have not been approved by the Board of Architects and not seeking land-use changes. At least give us 120 days pause to be able to solve this problem. This does compared with the Blue Ribbon Committee, my vision and you guys as well, is to select an individual that is, and I had asked Mr. Pardo if he would serve as my appointee on that committee, if you all are willing to move forward on this to instruct us and help us with the design for the Mediterranean bonus that gives us the Coral Gables that we are looking for, with projects that are compatible and get us back on track. If any of you all have any additional comments?

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, before we get into more comments, we have one additional person before we close the public comment on Zoom.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes sir, its Mr. Brett Gillis wishes to speak.

Mr. Gillis: Hello, good evening.

Mayor Lago: The floor is yours, Mr. Gillis.

Mr. Gillis: Thank you. Brett Gillis, 915 Ferdinand Street. I would just like to support this. I'll be very, very brief, the temporary action to help with Mediterranean bonus. The spirit and intent of the current ordinance just simply are not working. So, we look at buildings like the George Fink Studio, the Biltmore, San Sebastian Apartments and when I compare that to the buildings that have

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been given this Mediterranean bonus, especially the level 2 over the past ten years, there seems to be a big disconnect in how these buildings are achieving that and they don't really seem to qualify as an outstanding Mediterranean building. So, thank you everybody and have a great night.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Any further comments? Commissioner Menendez.

Commissioner Menendez: Before I make my comments, quick question. For the Blue-Ribbon Commission which I think is much needed, listening to all the residents speak here, e-mail, Zoom, there are other issues that pertain to dissatisfaction our community has with regards to the development, over development. Is there a way to add maybe a couple few other items to that Blue Ribbon Commission, I mean, I hate to waste the opportunity, when there are other things that actually impact?

Commissioner Anderson: That's why I didn't draw up the resolution yet, because I thought this needed to be discussed between us. One is, the first thing in order is the Med bonus issue, then we have other issues people are concerned with.

Commissioner Menendez: Setbacks and a whole bunch of things.

Commissioner Anderson: We do have wonderful experts that are residents in our community, they can help guide us that work in the field, that are architects.

Commissioner Menendez: Exactly. I think we all agree, we are fortunate as a community to have so many experts in the field that have actually pointed out, especially Mr. Pardo, Felix, so I think the more issues we can address and resolve, the better to take care of that opportunity.

Commissioner Anderson: Right. I'm just saying there are problems with the process that we need to address.

Commissioner Menendez: Exactly. Thank you. I want to commend the public for having a very cordial discussion, actually the whole Commission meeting. Unfortunately, we don't have enough coffee at this point in time, but this is the way meetings should be run and I commend the Mayor for keeping things steady. Felix, I was going to appoint you, personally for the Blue-Ribbon Commission because you know how highly I respect you as a person and as a professional, so if you can clone yourself that would be good that we could have more of you for that Blue Ribbon Commission. I may startle this person, but the first speaker, Maria Cruz, I want to agree with you completely. You made a great point, not necessarily that we have to, hopefully they are not coming for me (sirens going off), but there is work to be done, doesn't mean we have to throw, get rid of what Mayor Thomson said was her baby back in the day. It was created for a purpose with a reason, and I think what we've done as a city over time, and I'm not pointing fingers, because it's just over time, we've lost a disconnect with the spirit of things. The spirit of the Mediterranean bonus, we've lost connection with that spirit. We go literally by what it says, but the spirit is lost. And that applies to just about everything else that's been discussed and later on, hopefully, if we have time, Burger Bob's as well, the spirit of what community and what involvement is. Having said that,

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I've supported and I'm just going to speak sincerely, I've supported revisiting our code to find better ways to function as a government across the board. We've talked about Code Enforcement, there are so many issues, and we are working towards it, and we are listening, and we are doing our best. We may not always agree, but we'll get there. I've supported increasing transparency through the process, because before we were elected officials, we were just, we were residents who sometimes had to call and couldn't get an answer. I've met with the public, I know the Mayor has met with folks with WAWA, I've met with a couple parents, he did. People go, you'll never get them to sit down. Ed was there in a couple of my meetings, and we got things done, because we lowered the volume, you know, not with acoustics, but we just lowered the temperature in the room to get things done. You as the public, the Commission, the administration, actually have worked tirelessly to make our city better, it's a work in progress. But truly every Commission meeting, every workshop, every call we take, every time we walk the neighborhoods that's a step towards being better, and that's what we are about, becoming better, and we look to you for guidance and hopefully it's a two-way street where we can work together. But it's important to continue moving forward and working together and working forward to make a better community and that's what we need to do. The Charter, and I asked the City Attorney where the authority lies to make certain decisions and the Charter clearly grants the City Commission the authority to make decisions on behalf of the community, hopefully, for the good of the city. I know we've had, you know, over 100 years different Commissions and they work differently and as you can see, we work as a cordial body and we may not agree, necessarily, but we try to work towards accomplishing good. And for nearly 100 years that the city has been incorporated that Charter stands and our authority as a Commission to govern still stands. And over those 100 years, imagine what's happened and it's not that long – Great Depression, World War, great many wars, a global pandemic, and we've been able to overcome challenges and we've continued to strive to be better. I have complete faith in the Commission that you see today, to work with the community, work with the administration, to improve our code, and again, I don't want to stop at the Med bonus, I want everything on the table, and improve all aspects of the laws that we have today. Times change and we need to adjust. I do believe that during periods of introspection and improvement, we can continue to govern, and this is where I diverge and please from the heart, we can continue to move forward and get things done efficiently and effectively without necessarily pushing the stop button. To continue governing responsibly, this body has to reject projects that are in violation of the spirit of our zoning code. This body has to reject projects that are out of line with the spirit of the Mediterranean bonus. This body has to reject all items that come before us in conflict with the spirit of our city, that's what the Charter requires of us, that's what you expect of us. We are now coming out of a pandemic, shattered communities, shattered lives, shattered economies, we must continue working and moving forward. We shouldn't stop to, how can I say it, the Mediterranean bonus is what I'm going to definitely back and do everything I can, but we need to trust each other. I pledge to continue working with all of you to make sure the Med bonus meets your liking, everything in the zoning code is appropriate for you, but again, I cannot support the pause button. I think if we pause every time we come across a challenge, we will never get work done, and I think we need to move forward. So, I'm here for to support Commissioner Anderson, Blue Ribbon Commission and changing everything that needs to be changed. That's my position.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Fors.

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Commissioner Fors: I want to thank everybody, I won't bore you by thanking you several times over, thank you for coming, thank you for speaking, thank you Mr. Pardo for having a long conversation with me on Friday or Thursday, Thursday I believe, what many things we discussed today, I think some of the most important things, the two important elements that you mentioned, which I agree with 100 percent is that the discretion of the Board of Architects has to be refined and we have to ensure that they have first, discretion even if it says it, that they are able to weigh in early enough in the process where the goose is not already cooked, that makes perfect sense to me, as well as what maybe, as you say, the forgotten factor of compatibility. My immediate reaction to the pause moratorium was that I was not in favor of it. When I was running for office I sat with the Riviera Neighborhood Association at the time, formerly known, now known as the Coral Gables Neighborhood Association, we had a conversation, I was asked about would I support a moratorium. I said no. I don't like the message that it sends. Frankly, I'm scared of them in terms of the negative effects it can have on the city. It's no secret that it sometimes regarded as a dirty word. We continue to say, and we said at the Sunshine meeting regarding the Med bonus, that you have to give us a chance that this Commission has not approved any project that you have complained about. I have not. I have voted against projects that have come before me, granted one year of that was during Covid. I'm confident that everybody on this Commission agrees with the fact that the Med bonus is being misapplied and that you will not see this Commission approve a building that is not within the spirit of the Med bonus from here to the end of the year until we revise it. Those are my initial reactions, but I'm open to further discussion. I still think at the end of the day, and I usually take this theme, I usually take this position in the same context every time. It comes up in different areas, but all of us here were elected to come up here and make decisions and I'm generally averse to votes that we take ordinances or resolutions that then self-impose a limit on what we are able to vote on. We were elected to vote on things, to review projects, to enforce the Mediterranean bonus the way you want us to, and that's what we are going to do, but I'm always going to be against these types of resolutions where we are elected to vote on things and make decisions and then we are being asked to vote for something to take away our decision-making ability for the next six months. That's where I'm at, at this moment. Happy to discuss it further.

Commissioner Anderson: It's not six months, its 120 days.

Commissioner Fors: Four months, four months.

Mayor Lago: Vice Mayor Mena.

Vice Mayor Mena: I generally agree with Commissioner Fors. I've been harping on my issues with the Mediterranean bonus for some time now. I agree wholeheartedly that it needs to be restructured. As I mentioned before, I said that it should be a point of emphasis for this Commission and I'm glad that it is. We talked a lot about it at the community workshop. I'm absolutely in favor of the Blue-Ribbon Panel. One of the questions I have is, whether that panel can realistically in only four months really overhaul things. I don't know the answer to that. But those are all things to consider. I'm sort of on the fence, to be honest with you, about

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whether...because I tend philosophically to fall on the same side of what Commissioner Fors just...

Commissioner Anderson: Yes, I don't want to stop anything, but I did have that conversation with Mr. Pardo, as well as with Mr. Arthur. It's not that big of an ordinance, perhaps we can even do it in less time. Just a brief pause button. You want 90 days? – is that better?

Commissioner Fors: My decision has now been made. Doing it for less time is something I'm open to discussing and I also think it puts pressure to address this immediately. I want to address it immediately. We've been talking about it long enough dating before the election, and now, Sunshine meeting and now here. We all understood the good points have been made and we want to address it immediately and we shouldn't need those four months, and the Blue Ribbon, I'm all for the Blue-Ribbon Committee, but not if that's going to be a cause for delay.

Commissioner Anderson: No, not for delay. The idea is, quite frankly, I've already been having my conversations and we can have the resolution appointing our members, that doesn't mean they can't be rolling up their sleeves and getting the work done in the meantime and going ahead and moving forward. I want to move this forward and not let it drag on, that's the reason for the pause button. We have a deadline; it gets things done.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right. You envision the, this is another concern I have, not concern, but I apologize, I don't remember now if the other item, the Blue Ribbon one, sort of identify like whether you want certain, Mr. Pardo's background is obviously in architecture, I think that's good. So, is there, do you view it as having certain types of professions designated, residents who may have experience in certain areas?

Commissioner Anderson: I think we are best off picking somebody that knows what they are talking about, like Mr. Pardo knows the code very well, otherwise a member that you would choose wouldn't serve us very well. It would just be like you and me in a room talking about the Med bonus.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Commissioner Anderson: I do think there should be some qualifications. I impose my own qualification on myself, because I found somebody that I knew that really appreciates the Mediterranean, the compatibility aspects of it, get the quality architecture that we are looking for in these buildings, and it can be done, but we need a team to work together on it for us.

Vice Mayor Mena: I also think there is a policy decision though, that sort of underscores all of it, which is, do we want a Med bonus, or do you want a quality architecture bonus, or do you want just a bonus for whether it's open space, whatever identified items are.

Commissioner Anderson: I agree with you, but to have things being pushed through the process on a different set of rules right now, I do think we need a brief pause to be able to get it done, and

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I notice that Mr. Pardo is over there shaking his head up and down that he can get it done, from his viewpoint in that period of time. It's not a big ordinance.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right. Also, part of the reason I'm on the fence about it is, also again, if he can get it done in 90 days...

Mayor Lago: Why can't he get it done in 60 days?

Vice Mayor Mena: And he'll get it done in 90 days, then it didn't really matter there was a pause for 90 days at that point, because we are still going to have to approve any projects that come to us, so that's the difficult part. I'm trying to be flexible because I do agree with the spirit of addressing the Mediterranean bonus, again it's something I feel strongly about.

Commissioner Anderson: Having had to evaluate projects before and I know you've evaluated projects before. The degree of nuance that an architect can address is far better than you and I.

Vice Mayor Mena: Of course.

Commissioner Anderson: That's why I think we need the rules to be looked at.

Vice Mayor Mena: I agree with you on that part. I'm all for the panel.

Commissioner Anderson: I'm really not in favor of reviewing the projects.

Vice Mayor Mena: But we can do the panel regardless.

Commissioner Anderson: I know. I'm not in favor of looking at any projects come to us until these rules are revised.

Commissioner Fors: Question. I think I was talking to the City Attorney and its late and I've spoken to many people about Mediterranean bonuses and about many other thing's city related, were you the one that was telling me that, and I think I asked you that based on the current pipeline that no project would be coming to us within the next 120 days, or it would be highly unlikely?

City Attorney Ramos: It's unlikely, not 120 days, just in the next seven weeks. Certainly, there could be an as-of-right project that wants to take advantage of Med bonus, sure that could exist. But most projects that take advantage of it are mixed-use projects and those come to Commission and the next Commission meeting isn't until August 24th.

Commissioner Anderson: So, Mr. Pardo, I know has been looking at this. You want to answer that question in one sentence or so.

Mr. Pardo: I want you to understand two things. There are two types of projects; there are the projects that come to this Commission, there are very few of those that come to this Commission.

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Mediterranean bonus projects, if they comply with all the other regulations, you never see them. Not every Mediterranean bonus project is seen by the Commission. City Attorney will tell you that. The reason is only when it's a PAD, mixed-use, etc., those are the ones that come to the city for City Commission approval, but you are allowed to get a Mediterranean bonus and not come to this Commission. You are not approving the Mediterranean bonus. It already comes with that portion of it there.

Mayor Lago: If I may, I haven't said anything in regard to this issue, just one second. I've been here eight years. Every major project that has been built in this city has come to the Commission, every major one. I have some serious concerns about the Med bonus today, we all do. We've been talking about it for a long time, the Vice Mayor has been beating the drum for two years. I've had multiple conversations with Mr. Trias. I've had conversations with Mr. Cejas about the issue, we all have. What I find concerning is that you are asking people that you elected not to do their job. I'm proud of my voting record. I'm proud of the projects that I voted against. I'm proud that I gave my word to the individuals in the back of the room that I'm looking at right now that I would not support a project that was at 190 feet and then it was proposed to me at 140 feet and I still won't support it, because the code only allows 70 feet. I voted against the building across the street for the height increase. I voted against Gables Station. I voted against the parking garages. I voted against Miracle Mile. I voted against the doubling of the density in North Gables. Miracle Mile got me in so much hot water that the person who I voted against raised hundreds of thousands of dollars against me. I think we need to step back, and I think Commissioner Anderson is doing a marvelous job and I think she is bringing this, not that I think, let me correct, she is bringing this from a correct place, but what you have is a new elected body that's here to represent this community, and it's time that they do their job. Like I said, at the three and-a-half hour meeting that we had, after much discussion and listening, which is key, listening more than anything, let this Commission do their job. If you tell me that you are going to revamp the Med bonus, how are we going to revamp the Med bonus? If you tell me that we are going to potentially get rid of the Med bonus, and require more open space, better designed buildings, it's going to take more than 90 days, Mr. Pardo you know this very well. You are one of the most respected architects in this community, you know that we can't do this in 90 days. So, we put a moratorium, 90 days comes and goes. We need to rewrite the code; we need to take some serious steps to do certain things in regard to the Med bonus. We need to address issues with staff and the BOA. I'm not saying it can't be done, but I find it very hard to believe that we can get this done in 90 days; and what you're asking is to just stop any approval by this Commission. Name me one major project that hasn't come to this Commission for approval. The reason why they all come is just like Mr. Pardo said, PADs, mixed-use, more importantly mixed-use, forces all projects even if they are as-of-right projects, they are still forced to come here for Commission approval as required by the Charter.

Mr. Pardo: I think Mr. Mayor, with all due respect, you should ask Mr. Trias if any project can be afforded the Mediterranean bonus without coming to this Commission.

Mayor Lago: You are 100 percent right on that, but that's as long as it's not mixed-use though, it's only residential and there are very few projects that – I can't remember one that was approved in this city and didn't come before this Commission, because in most cases they are PADs, or they

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are mixed-uses. I can't remember one and Mr. Trias, maybe he can correct me, or my colleagues can correct me, but I can't remember one, they've all come before the Commission. So, we have an opportunity as a Commission to say no, or we have an opportunity to say no and then shape the project via Valencia. As Commissioner Anderson can tell you, we worked together on that project for six months on a project that came before the Commission, could not get enough votes to pass and transitioned through the help of the residents, like Commissioner Anderson, we were able to get 10,000 square foot park in the corner and get a much nicer better designed project for the community, and that project then ended up getting support of all the residents and the Commission. So, what I want to see is, I don't want to see us approve something today, spend 90 days, we have a moratorium, we stop construction in the city, no approvals, that's great, but we didn't revamp anything. We have a deeper problem here than just the Mediterranean bonus. We have a problem that deals with the way that projects are brought and cooked and then they bring them to the BOA, and they come to the Commission. We negotiated doubling the density of projects in North Gables on the fly on the Commission here, and I said, I will not go from 50 to 75, 75 to 100, I won't, and now when the projects come in, the projects come at 115 units per acre. So, I really need somebody to convince me why this is a good idea, because I don't see a plan of action outside of just say, let's call for a moratorium, we'll fix it. There is a lot of aspirational promises, but I don't see anything that allow us to deliver this in 60, 90, 120 days, except for the fact that we got it done. We closed construction down, that's it.

Mr. Pardo: Mr. Mayor...

Mayor Lago: But do you agree with me on that point or no?

Mr. Pardo: As a citizen, I have no disagreement with what you just said, I respect that very much and I think really that staff got the message clearly tonight, very clearly tonight about even the projects that are in the pipeline, which means the projects that are being reviewed today by the Board of Architects, they got the message, they got the memo. That's all that we need to do now to make sure that it's not a foot race now to try to get it under the wire before anything changes for the better. So, I appreciate it and thank you.

Mayor Lago: I would love it and I gear this more towards the Commissioner, tell me how we get there. What is the path to achieving something tangible that we can deliver? Just like I gave the residents in the back who have come to see me, and I have visited these residents how many times, three times in your neighborhood. I gave them my word. When I sit down with the attorney that represents a developer, I've told them no, I'm not voting for your project, because of the following reasons. So, we need to be a Commission that actually votes in favor of what is appropriate for the city, what's in line with the city, and if we are going to give bonuses, if we are going to approve, let's say an additional floor, I've said it, I'm the first one to say it, guys maybe a project is allowed per code to have seven floors, maybe eight floors is not a bad thing, if we get a nice park on the side, if we get certain amenities and contributions that actually make our community better.

Mr. Pardo: Absolutely.

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Mayor Lago: Because I voted no on the Gables Station project, that was probably a 60-plus foot height increase on that project.

Vice Mayor Mena: And you are the only person up here who even voted on it.

Mayor Lago: Yes. And by the way, I'm the only one that voted on a lot of these projects.

Vice Mayor Mena: Nobody else was here.

Mr. Pardo: I also think as an addition to the Blue-Ribbon Committee that the City Architect, *the* City Architect, not someone else, but *the* City Architect has to sit on that board, to make sure they can contribute, and they get the message, and they are the ones that basically give the guidelines to the Board of Architects, to make sure that we keep it between the lines.

Vice Mayor Mena: Great idea.

Mr. Pardo: So, I think that would be a good start, but at the same time also, I think staff has already gotten the message from the Commission clearly. I feel comfortable. I can sleep at night tonight because of that, and I really thank you all for that, regardless of whether you hit the pause button or not. The other thing is, maybe you can revisit it once the Blue-Ribbon Committee is formed, once there is a goal, once everybody understands, because I don't think you have to throw the code out the window. It's more give people direction. Chief is here, he gives his officers direction, every day they do. They know exactly what they are supposed to be doing, what they are supposed to be looking for. That's all we need to do is just put it back on the train tracks.

Mayor Lago: And by the way, like I've always told you. We met the other day for a long time in my office, and I want you to please help me what I'm representing later, if you would serve me. You serve with distinction. You have a lot of institutional knowledge, more institutional knowledge than probably anyone in this room when it comes to the City of Coral Gables. We need guidance and voting against projects is not an easy thing, I'm telling you, I'm being honest and candid with you. You have pressure from all sides, lobbyists, land use attorneys, developers, but we have to do what's in the best interest of the city. That is the most important thing. So, I don't have a problem with a moratorium, but show me what we are going to accomplish. Going to put a pause button, and what does that do? – what do we end up with?

Commissioner Anderson: I think what we are looking for is a clear set of rules for staff to follow and it's going to be a little difficult for them to anticipate.

Mayor Lago: Can I add something in regard to that, may I?

Commissioner Anderson: Yes.

Mayor Lago: But there are clear rules, there are clear rules. Let's talk about those rules. There are projects in the downtown that before anybody was here employed or elected, that I'm aware of,

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that Mediterranean bonuses and they look like modern buildings, because they put one archway, or they have a walkway around the building.

Mr. Pardo: Something nominal.

Mayor Lago: There is one with two giant birds, that building got a Med bonus. I didn't vote on that project.

Commissioner Anderson: I would call that the...effect, and again, we need clear rules to avoid the interpretive architecture that was not originally envisioned in the Med bonus itself. We've lost our way. So, we need a definition that avoids Med bonuses being given out for projects like that.

Mr. Pardo: And I do believe that if you look at 50102 V, and you direct staff, you make sure that the architects are looking at everything, the mass, the height, to understanding, to relationship, and like I said before, compatibility.

Mayor Lago: Professor, if I may, on the record, what do you think the breakdown is in between the BOA and staff or between the BOA and the Commission, where is the breakdown, tell me?

Mr. Pardo: I think that the breakdown, the complete breakdown of this system systematically, has been one thing, and that is that by the time that these projects are getting to the BOA, they are done. I said to the Commissioner, I said, once the souffle is done you can just add salt and pepper. It's done. You are not going to alter the taste. So, I think that the two-step process which exist in the code which is preliminary approval, and final approval has been taken lightly to try to speed up the process. The problem is that sometimes speeding up the process isn't good. So what you need to do is make sure that the BOA, the City Architect, the DRC are opining and it becomes a team effort with the developer and their architect being part of the team effort, and if you do that you are going to get better products, and then by the time it gets here, having a preliminary approval, having the Commission opine on a PAD and say, you know, this is too big or the mas doesn't look right, or whatever, you know when you see something that you like and that's why I said the challenge between those two projects, which by the say this marine over here actually was describing one of the two projects. I think that the thing is, you want to be able not to waste the time and the resources either of the developer. You don't want to lead him down the wrong path and at the end of the development, at the end of the development process, you want to be proud of the project the same as they want to be able to make money and be proud of the project. A lot of developers when you look at them, they take pride in what they do, and that's not just making money, its doing good developments. And I think at the end of the day, that's what Merrick tried to do. Merrick was way, way, way ahead of his time. In fact, he was 100 years ahead of his time. Now what we've got to do is make sure that we just don't make a mistake, and now you see for the last ten years what's been going up and there are a lot of mistakes out there, more than the positive things that exist. If you look at those two pages, I think you are in good shape. If you get the Blue-Ribbon Committee going, I think you are in good shape and then you always have the ability of hitting the pause button.

Mayor Lago: And you know, another big issue, if I may add this and I'd love your input on this, is the fact that what we are seeing is, especially as we get less and less land or assemblage that is available in the Gables, you are seeing people stretch to purchase properties at exorbitant prices, and then they bring that issue to us. They say, I have to do this, or this piece of property has an awkward zoning, its caught between two different zoning classifications, or just because the neighboring property across the street has it, I want the same thing, and they already bought the property, and now let's go vertical, and I need the zoning.

Mr. Pardo: I think the key word here is reasonable. It has to be reasonable development. It has to be compatible development and at the same time, people have to make decisions. When you develop you are not guaranteed that you are going to make money. When you make an investment, you are not guaranteed you are going to make money. Everything works out, you make money, but I think if people are expecting already a bonus as an automatic with very little in, I just heard the other day that a project that was approved for Mediterranean bonus was being value-engineered and they came in for revisions at City Hall, and the Building Department and nobody went back and went back to the Board of Architects to say, look at all the details they are removing.

Mayor Lago: Professor, if I may. How would you deliver on a moratorium Commissioner Anderson? – how would you deliver on a document that actually deliver something, that actually accomplishes a goal, you understand what I'm saying? At the end of the 60 days, 30 days, 90 days, whatever it may be, I'll be honest with you, I think 90 days is too much for me, personally. I want to see something. I want to see options. I want to see staff brought to the table. I want to see the BOA. I want an understanding because, by the way, when someone buys a project and they bring forth a design to maximize their FAR, case in point, Gables Station, which goes to 165 feet when the code only allows you 90 and correct me if I'm wrong. Do you know why they require that 165 feet? – because the code requires a certain amount of parking spaces, and the lot was a very long lot running parallel to U.S.-1. So, what they needed to do was they needed to go higher to maximize the FAR. They didn't go over the FAR that's allowable by the lot, but as a result of having to park it, because of the size and the configuration of the lot, they had to go vertical to be able to use all the density, the intensity, and the FAR. So, they had to ask for an increase for – it was a PAD, so they had to ask for an increase in the height. How do you resolve issues like that, besides just having a Commission that votes no?

Mr. Pardo: It's a fair statement. I think that having a timeline, having tasks, being able to resolve the issues, it's not that difficult if you know what you're doing, and the point is that it can be done, you don't have to do it tonight, you don't have to do it within "X" amount of time, but having at least that gameplan and understanding what has to be corrected, that's fine. But the whole point is, not continuing to approve during this duration of time, not continuing to approve non-worthy architecture in this city.

Commissioner Anderson: So, I would like to...

Mayor Lago: May I ask Suramy Cabrera just one quick question on regards to pipeline.

Vice Mayor Mena: I had the same question.

Mayor Lago: Professor don't leave. Out of respect I'm calling you now. Ms. Cabrera how are you?

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you for being here.

Development Services Director Cabrera: Hungry.

[Laughter]

Mayor Lago: I ate a sandwich standing up outside. Can you give me a little bit of an idea of pipeline of what we're looking at in regard to projects that are potentially forthcoming to the Commission?

Development Services Director Cabrera: So, I don't know of any large projects that have been to BOA that are scheduled to go before Planning and Zoning and then to the Commission. I just want to make everybody aware that every project that I've heard tonight that the residents are not happy with or complaining about are projects that staff has no authority to approve. These projects have to be approved by several boards and eventually this Commission. So, I think staff works very hard to bring you the best project that they can, but at the end of the day, we don't have authority to approve these projects.

Mayor Lago: If I may and you are 100 percent correct, but what staff does is staff recommends projects, and I've had this conversation with Mr. Trias before and I said, please do not recommend the project that deviates from the zoning code.

[Applause]

Mayor Lago: I appreciate it, but let's stay on task here.

Development Services Director Cabrera: And I would agree with you. You know, I have to reject work all the time. As a structural plan's examiner, I used to have to tell people no all the time and it's very easy for me in a technical field to say no, but when you have a code and you have a developer that comes in with a set of plans that technically does meet our code, it's just that you don't like it, that's a different thing.

Mayor Lago: That's different though. Let me give you an example, if I may. This is before your time, Gables Station became approved, the Agave Project came approved, those are projects that I voted no on, on the height, because I think there should be a nice project on that piece of property, but I voted no on the height, because it was too excessive. Should there be a project? – yes, there should be a project. It's a great piece of property to do something great. Now, I've seen it and I can't remember, because it's a long time already, but I've asked, why are you coming before us with a project, recommending this project because then that gives, that emboldens the developer even more.

Development Services Director Cabrera: And I agree with you.

Mayor Lago: Because all of staff is saying that this project, which is asking for additional this and additional that, case in point, the parking garages I think came, that FAR was at almost a 6.0, and I understand it's another project I voted no, because the sheer magnitude of that project. I didn't make too many friends voting no on that one either. But my point is that we have to be very careful when staff says, I'm in favor of this project. If it meets the zoning code, if it's within the height, the intensity, the density, and it just happens to be a mixed-use project or maybe they are asking for a variance of some sort, but it complements the project. We have to be very thoughtful and be very careful on that point, and I've said that, it's not the first time that I say this, I've said it before on the record.

Development Services Director Cabrera: And I would agree with you, and I would say that we have made changes so that, first of all, Board of Architects is not looking at every single little window that comes in through the city. We've already changed the process so that the Board of Architects can really concentrate on the projects that have to go before them and not just everything that staff doesn't have an opportunity to review and that's really the way we were working for many, many years. So that has changed, and it comes with a better recommendation from the staff on what are the zoning issues, how does it meet the Med bonus, all these things and I'm not a planning person, I'm a structural engineer, I'm your Development Services Director, so I'm not an expert, but I do understand the process and I do know that we have been making changes. The process is better. Is there room for improvement? – there is always room for improvement, we are always working to improve the process.

Mayor Lago: My point is that when you tell me that there aren't any projects that's coming before the Commission in the August Commission meeting and there isn't any that are coming in September.

Development Services Director Cabrera: I don't know that anything has gone to the Planning and Zoning Board, right?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Not yet. However, I would say that there are three projects that would go through the process of Planning and Zoning and then Commission. So, depending on how you decide to apply or not apply this moratorium, it may affect a few projects.

Commissioner Fors: But they would all have to come through this desk ultimately, right, to the Commission?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Fors: The ones that could possibly.

Development Services Director Cabrera: They haven't even been through the Planning and Zoning Board yet.

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Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The three that I am speaking of have gone to DRC; one of them was, I know was in great detail by one of our residents, they have not gone to Planning and Zoning yet or even Board of Architects.

Commissioner Anderson: And I asked you for, basically a whole bunch of information, because I'm trying to dissect and understand the process as well, and fortunately Mr. Pardo understands it better than I do, but looking at the timeline, goes to DRC first, DRC looks at elements of the Mediterranean bonus at all?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Generally, yes, and if there are some issues they are raised at that point.

Commissioner Anderson: And Board of Architects does the same.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well, Board of Architects actually makes a decision.

Commissioner Anderson: So, if the rules change in the middle of the process, then we have to start over again, right?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I suppose, yes.

Commissioner Anderson: And that's why I'm suggesting a brief moratorium. I want to go back to the Professor.

Mayor Lago: Oh, by the way Commissioner, if I may, just a question aimed more toward yourself. Let's just say we had a 60-day moratorium, we bring a revamped Med bonus before the boards then it has to come to the Commission. So, it's just not a moratorium, it's all the approvals that go along with revamping the Mediterranean bonus. So, you are talking about projects that would not be able to come before the Commission so that we could do our job as elected officials to say yea or nay, it wouldn't be 90 days, it wouldn't be 120, it would be potentially 160, 180 days, because it has to go through the process. Whatever decision we make as a board, we have to have it presented to the boards for ratification and then brought before this Commission.

Commissioner Anderson: Which is my point. We need to give the boards the correct direction, instead of requiring them to redo the work again, that's the thinking behind having a brief moratorium. I can only ask experts such as Mr. Pardo, what is a reasonable period of time for you to get this work done?

Mr. Pardo: Because these thresholds are already there in the code, you don't have to touch the code, what you have to do is now just look at the almost formula that has been set up to see how these things get checked off to be able to get that bonus, the bonus component of it. I think that if you rereview the project that the neighbor went over, which is the Alexian Project, which Mr. Trias was talking about now, and you look at that project and you ask the Board of Architects just to

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take another look at that project, simply by looking at 5012(b), then that becomes a different review, because they held back on the things that they were supposed to be reviewing. Just that alone itself you are going to be looking at a project that it should not be going to the Planning Board now. It should not be continuing...

Development Services Director Cabrera: That hasn't gone to Board of Architects at all.

Mr. Pardo: I'm sorry.

Development Services Director Cabrera: That hasn't gone to the Board of Architects.

Commissioner Anderson: I'm going to ask you to answer the question. How much time will it take for you to look at the code, come up with your recommendations, as far as the Mediterranean bonus is concerned, whether you are going to have a cleaner definition of compatibility?

Mr. Pardo: Because you have...

Commissioner Anderson: How much time?

Mr. Pardo: ...so many people on the board, if they are all architects, they all know, they understand the code requirements, they understand Coral Gables, you have qualified people sitting on that committee, you could probably have it in 60 days.

City Attorney Ramos: Mr. Pardo can I ask you a question. You just said something about implementation, which confused me, because the Zoning in Progress is written as a rewrite of the Mediterranean ordinance, bonus ordinance.

Mr. Pardo: Right.

City Attorney Ramos: What I'm hearing from you is the ordinance itself is not a problem, it's the way it's being applied.

Mr. Pardo: The way that the people that are in black and white, which I had mentioned, the Board of Architects, for example, they are not being instructed to look at those 20 factors.

City Attorney Ramos: Okay. But then that's not a Zoning in Progress to change a code section.

Mr. Pardo: Well, but wait, there's another part of it which is, the portion of the Mediterranean bonuses.

City Attorney Ramos: And that's what I'm focusing on right now.

Mr. Pardo: There are two different things; the design guidelines, the first part, that's fine. Now on the Med bonuses where you are getting bonuses where you are checking off a certain amount of

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factors based on this thing, that is what has to be now resolved. So, you have to do two things. First of all, educate the people that are reviewing your plans, Board of Architects, it's not a Building Department issue, this is the Board of Architects issue, then you have to then take a look at what makes the Mediterranean bonuses, so you could get additional height, so you could get additional FAR. Those are the ones that had become diluted.

City Attorney Ramos: The criteria in the code.

Mr. Pardo: That is what has to be corrected. That is why the moratorium would be justified if the Commission wanted to go that route.

City Attorney Ramos: Understood.

Mr. Pardo: Sorry to confuse you on that, but these are two things. That's why it's very doable because you just go, you just step back and you are taking a look at the factors where you check those off; and the other part is, an education thing. And by the way, I disagree with the statement that the system is better now because there are certain things that have been taken off the table. I think it's terrible and the reason I think it's terrible because it's being done for speed or efficiency or something like that. When I sat on the Board of Architects for many, many years, one of the things is even if it was an addition, the Board of Architects reviewed an addition and they reviewed it for preliminary and for final. The reason that we did that is not to waste anyone's time, the homeowner, the architect, or anyone else. So, we'd have the preliminary, it would be approved and then they would come in with the final plans to be able to do that. That doesn't exist anymore because it's now being done either by the City Architect or people that are helping the City Architect, which may not be all the qualified people that you need to do that. Now there are other things, like windows and doors and things like that, which again, you may think that it's not important, but if you remember one of the ladies that spoke and she said that when she moved here and she had to change her front doors, etc., it is part of the architecture. These are part of the things that are important. So, as they say, the devil is in the details and none of this should be taken lightly from a 16-story building to an addition to a house. The Board of Architects has a charge, and the Board of Architects should not have its hands tied for the sake of efficiency.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: With the permission of the chair.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: I'd like to follow up on a question that Maria made. Mr. Pardo, you said that the Board of Architects hands are tied. Is there something in the code that is tying the Board of Architects hands or process?

Mr. Pardo: No sir. I said clearly, Mr. Manager, I said very clearly that they have been verbally instructed. I have talked to current members, previous members of the board, and on top of that I've talked to the City Architect and the previous City Architect that retired. I have proof if you need that in writing, but I'll tell you right now, if the project already comes designed where its

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finalized, whether it's the Board of Architects, the City Architect, or the DRC, or this Commission, how can you tell someone just take all those plans and throw them out the window. That's why it's not working.

Commissioner Fors: Vice Mayor Lago has done that. You gave a list of how many times you voted no.

Mayor Lago: That's just some. That's just some.

Commissioner Fors: I've done the same myself. We stand here ready to do it again, and also supportive of addressing all the concerns of the Mediterranean bonus.

Development Services Director Cabrera: I'm hearing two things, because I'm hearing about the Med bonus, which is what's being discussed here, but Mr. Pardo is also bringing up issues with just in general because the additions, and the homes and all that, have nothing to do with the Med bonus, right, and the windows and all that, so I think he has a general complaint about how the Board of Architects works.

Mayor Lago: I wouldn't say complain. I think...

Development Services Director Cabrera: I think its two different – yes, I'm just trying to make sure we don't confuse.

Mayor Lago: He has a lot of technical knowledge and I think that when I've had the pleasure of sitting down with you, I take what you know and what you say as an opportunity to learn. My question to you really quickly is, when you say it comes baked to the BOA.

Mr. Pardo: I'm sorry.

Mayor Lago: When you say the plans, the design documents come "baked."

Mr. Pardo: In other words...

Mayor Lago: Who "bakes" them?

Mr. Pardo: Okay. Let's put it this way. A developer approaches the city. The city has a Development Review Officer, a DRO. There are multiple DROs or there can be multiple DROs according to the code. So, what happens is that a DRO is supposed to be expediting and moving and directing the project, but what happens sometimes is that by the time the Board of Architects or by the time the City Architect or the DRC sees the project, that developer has already been working with the DRO on the design of the project for weeks or months, sometimes over a year. That's how it gets cooked, but if they would have come in with a preliminary plan and gone to the DRC or the Board of Architects, the City Architect, there would have been more flexibility to change those plans before it kept going down that path. So, you understand what I'm saying, what

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I'm saying is that I think that the code is crystal clear, instead it's the BOA that has that review responsibility.

Mayor Lago: So, Mr. Trias, explain to me about the DRO and the moments when the project is worked on prior to submission to the BOA. What does your staff do?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Staff talks to the architect or the developer, whoever is representing the project and advises on issues regarding zoning or the process. Let me answer your question. You said, who designs the buildings? The architect designs the buildings, not staff, not the DRO, and not the City Commission. The difference between some of the projects that have been spoken of very highly and the ones that are not liked as much has to do with the work of the architect, it's as simple as that.

Development Services Director Cabrera: I just would like to extend to Mr. Pardo, if he could come meet with me, because I've heard a lot of things here today about a process that happens in my department that I am not aware of, because I am not aware that a DRO expedites projects or anything of that nature. So, I really need, would like to meet with you and go over this, because that to me would be something that I really would need to look into; and I would advise anybody here to come to the Board of Architects meetings and see what it is and give us your feedback.

Mayor Lago: What are you showing there?

Unidentified Speaker: Part 6-B of the code actually requires...

Development Services Director Cabrera: I understand. It says that there is a DRO, but we don't have a defined DRO, we don't have a person designated as a DRO. I know exactly what it says, but that is not a position, and I can also tell you about other things where there may be a definition in the code, and we don't actually have a position for that person. So, there is no DRO in the city that's expediting any projects.

Unidentified Speaker: It's not specified, but currently the way its worded it says, staff reviews is required first and then a recommendation is made to the Board of Architects after and that's probably the area that would be worked on during the proposed moratorium.

Mr. Pardo: So the issue is that the way that this gets "cooked" is the developer is meeting with staff, their architect is working with staff and staff is taking them down a certain path, but if the nine members that you have sitting on the Board of Architects looks at a preliminary design and they make suggestions, especially the bigger projects, the substantial ones that eventually you see, I will guarantee you that you're probably going to be looking at a better looking project by the time it gets here. And by the way, the Alexian Project, I downloaded it from your website, and I took about 12 pages from it, and I just redlined it left to right, completely redlined, and the reason I did that was just to see where I would have issues with the quality of the design taking into account what's already in the code and this is so important. This is why when you look at those

buildings that are up, you say, I like that building, and you know what, that's a real problem. And unfortunately, those projects are up forever. Thank you so much for your time.

Mayor Lago: Thank you sir.

Mr. Pardo: Thank you so much.

Mayor Lago: Mr. ACM.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Yes sir. Mr. Pardo, so I think we are agreeing with what Mr. Trias said that the difference is in the quality of the architecture, right.

Mr. Pardo: No sir. I disagree 100 percent and I'll tell you why. That architect, when you work with staff, I've done this for decades, when you work with staff sometimes what happens is you're being lead a certain way; you're being lead a certain way and you're expecting that that's the way that the city will approve it, okay, but the problem is that what makes this place completely unique from every municipality in the State of Florida is that we have a Board of Architects that was established by that gentleman up there, and the problem is that over time since I chaired that board and I chaired a lot of other boards in this city, the problem is that it's been diluted and the reason that it's been diluted for whatever reason is that now we can turn around and blame the quality of the architect. Now we can – you could actually turn around and just blame the Board of Architects for doing a bad job or blaming the City Architect or blaming the DRC. The problem is that when it starts that City Architect, that Board of Architects has to get involved at the beginning, because they are architects.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: So, you're not saying the problem is the code, as much as it is a process problem.

Mr. Pardo: Mr. Manager there are two parts, as I said to the City Attorney. The first part is the code is there, you have to make sure you educate your Board of Architects and your City Architect of what they have to look for and the DRC, because its in there for the DRC too. Then the second part is that the implementation of the bonuses of the Mediterranean ordinance, which became a formula, and by the way, after the Bank of Coral Gables was designed and the Colonnade was being designed, this City Commission gave you or the previous City Commission gave 11 variances and they gave a number of variances for the Hyatt and you look at those two buildings, not only did one of them say a historic building, but the other one also did a good job. You look at those buildings and you look at the Bank of Coral Gables that's almost 40 years old now, and you say, you know they look pretty good, and then you look at other things that have been developed afterwards and they don't look that great, but the funny thing is that during that time when Dorothy Thomson sat on this Commission they implemented a moratorium, but meanwhile they gave variances for those projects to be able to continue and they were built. So, its two things; there is one part that there is nothing wrong with the code, its simply that the City Architect and the Board of Architects are not being told, look you have to look at all these factors; and then the other part is really simple, you have to take this thing, and this is not painting by numbers.

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Assistant City Manager Santamaria: So, may I ask a question of the City Attorney. Madam Attorney is the Zoning in Progress or Process applicable to what Mr. Pardo just described?

City Attorney Ramos: The code is being amended then its appropriate. If we are just changing how, we implement the code, then it's not appropriate.

Mr. Pardo: So that's why the part of the Mediterranean bonuses is the part that is affected by a moratorium if the Commission chooses to do so. So, it is correct. But there is a bigger portion of this, its not just one thing, it's all of it.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Thank you sir.

Commissioner Anderson: One closing comment. Rather than lead developers down the wrong path, what its going to take to give Mediterranean bonus. The thought is to hit the pause button, allow experts to do their work and bring it back to us. Mr. Pardo feels that a board of that nature needs 60 days. You all need to choose your individuals that you feel are best qualified for that position and let them get to work and get back to us in that period of time.

Vice Mayor Mena: Just seems absurd that that's going to get done in 60 days, to be honest with you. It's a lot of work.

Commissioner Anderson: You know, we don't get anywhere if we don't try.

Vice Mayor Mena: Well, I agree, but its still got to come to us. We may not agree with what you suggest, like maybe back to the drawing board. So, I mean the idea of this getting done in 60 days, I think is...

Commissioner Anderson: No. They can get their work done in 60 days.

Vice Mayor Mena: Maybe.

Mr. Pardo: Mr. Vice Mayor you know, you're right.

Vice Mayor Mena: You haven't even convened the committee, that's not going to happen today even, its going to be August before they are even appointed.

Commissioner Anderson: I understand that. I asked a finite question, its how much time do they need? That's why I said 60 plus 30 is the 90-day period.

Mr. Pardo: I would be more than happy to provide a list of architects if you would entertain architects that are experienced, architects that know Coral Gables, architects that sat on the board that have served on the board, architects that can do you proud, and people that are qualified to do it, and that way you just cut to the chase. That's how you do it in 60 days.

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Commissioner Anderson: Any further discussion gentlemen?

Mr. Pardo: If you feel uncomfortable with the moratorium, but you make sure that staff basically is looking at these projects and analyzing the first part of the code, which are the 20 elements that the board should see, I think there is no reason why the Board of Architects, as they sit today, shouldn't be reviewing those things and seeing how they play out within what's already in the code, that would be the step in the right direction, and then that also gives everyone, every developer, every architect, an understanding that look, you know we got to be a lot more sensitive to these things.

Commissioner Anderson: We had this discussion about compatibility, and everybody looks at that word a different way. I just don't want to lead developers down the wrong path, spend all this money doing drawings and we change the rules of the game. So that's why I suggested this brief pause button to get this work done. I think in fairness to all the money they invest in architects, to get these plans done that the pause button is appropriate.

Commissioner Fors: In my view, they proceed at their own risk of the Commission voting no on their project, just like the Vice Mayor has done many times in the past, as well as I have and Commissioner Mena. They proceed at their own risk, they are all watching today, I'm sure or if not, they are going to be watching it tomorrow. We're here – I would feel more comfortable with a Zoning in Progress if there was a more concrete plan in place.

Mr. Pardo: Mr. Commissioner, I feel confident that by the time of your next Commission that you'll probably have all these different things already in place and moving in the right direction, if everyone cooperates, and if that's the case, you would be able to know, not only what direction but whether the placement of the moratorium is...

Mayor Lago: Then why not do it in 30-day sprints.

Mr. Pardo: It could be done that way.

Mayor Lago: 30-day sprints. We have a Commission meeting in 30 days, and we can renew it if progress is being made and we are headed in the right direction.

Mr. Pardo: Correct. That's a great idea.

Mayor Lago: But if this is just a ploy to stop development and stop construction, I won't stand for that, and I'll tell you why. Again, I look at the individuals in the back room, I've been to their neighborhoods three times, when you run for office, you put yourself under these lights, you have to be leaders, we have to do what's right on behalf of the Commission, and you have to vote your conscience. We've passed some very, very strict legislation today, which shines a bright light on lobbying and influence in this community. So, to me, it's not an issue whether the process needs to be looked at, I brought it up multiple times. Now I think the issue is, I'm not going to pass

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something just to pass something. There has to be a real schedule of deliverables to move forward. I'm 100 percent behind the Blue-Ribbon Panel, I've called for those before. I would love to have a list of individuals that you recommend, so that we can make a decision by this Friday via e-mail, each one of us will appoint somebody so they can start working on Monday and we can visit this on a month-to-month basis, that's something that we see progress being made.

Mr. Pardo: I think you will be very pleased.

City Attorney Ramos: So, my only concern with the Blue-Ribbon Panel, we need to actually draft a resolution that explains who's going to serve on this panel, who they are appointed by what their role is. There is no meeting before August 24th.

Mayor Lago: Why is that. Why do we have to do that, explain to me.

City Attorney Ramos: Because they don't exist, unless you are going to give me all the parameters now and we'll vote on it and then we'll draft it.

Vice Mayor Mena: I think the parameters should be whoever we appoint. Its up to us to then pick people that are qualified.

City Attorney Ramos: So, it will be five members, no appointment from the Manager?

Vice Mayor Mena: It should probably be City Architect as well.

City Attorney Ramos: So, the City Architect and five members.

Vice Mayor Mena: The City Architect will be the Manager's appointment.

City Attorney Ramos: So, five members, one appointed by each Commissioner, and not ratified by the Commission because it won't come back to you.

Vice Mayor Mena: No, we are ratifying each other's right to appoint somebody today.

City Attorney Ramos: Okay. So now we have six, which is weird because you could have a tie vote.

Mayor Lago: We could have somebody from the BOA, an appointment from the BOA.

Vice Mayor Mena: They don't ultimately have the final authority to decide something, they are each just going to make a recommendation. There may be touch points within that where you say, some of us feel this, some of us feel that on certain issues.

Mr. Pardo: What I would do is find some seasoned architects that have tremendous experience at their fingertips and that they don't have a learning curve, if you want to do 60 days.

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City Attorney Ramos: You're comfortable with six members, all six are going to be architects, the City Architect and then five other architects?

Vice Mayor Mena: Whoever we...

City Attorney Ramos: No technical expertise?

Commissioner Menendez: I prefer technical.

Commissioner Fors: Well, I think it's incumbent upon us, we are not really doing our job if we appoint somebody who doesn't have.

Vice Mayor Mena: Hypothetically it could be some sort of engineer, somebody else in the industry that's not necessarily...

Mr. Pardo: I think that's a huge mistake. I think an engineer does not belong on this committee, simply because they are engineers, and that's how we...my numbers this is not the way we should be doing this. Should be seasoned people that have sat on the Board of Architects, practicing architects that design, not technical people. We don't need that.

Vice Mayor Mena: Fair enough.

Commissioner Fors: Nothing is going to come up from now until the next meeting.

Development Services Director Cabrera: No, not to the Planning and Zoning Board, no.

Mayor Lago: That may be a good opportunity to buy us 30 days to start now.

Development Services Director Cabrera: I tell you; I would agree with Mr. Pardo that if you are going to put this committee together and look at our Mediterranean bonus that they definitely should be architects and you probably want architects to have experience in Mediterranean architecture. You probably don't want somebody that's known for modern architecture.

Commissioner Fors: Obviously.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: We will not schedule anything to Planning and Zoning until...

City Attorney Ramos: We are not talking about the committee, not about the Zip, so I'm just trying to get the parameters of the committee then we are going to vote on the Zip and then we'll know the answer.

Commissioner Fors: Regarding the Zip what I was going to propose since nothing is coming anyway, to defer the entire Zip to August and then put in a Zip that also has the Blue-Ribbon

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Committee and the plan of action for implementation, including implementation guidelines or whatever we are going to do.

Development Services Director Cabrera: Yes. Now Ramon, I need your expertise here. There is nothing going to Planning and Zoning Board. We don't have to schedule anything, however, there could be projects that have Med 1 that would be as-of-right and will go through BOA, but not come to Planning and Zoning or to the Commission, correct?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: There is one project which I plan to recommend denial, which is Ponce Tower, that wants to be scheduled for Planning and Zoning in August. That's the one that I think is probably the one that you know about, and you know it's been very controversial.

Commissioner Fors: And that's as-of-right? That's not as-of-right.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The complete opposite to as-of-right.

Commissioner Anderson: The as-of-not-right. (Laughter)

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I'll announce it – I plan to recommend denial for many of those requests, yes.

Mayor Lago: So, Commissioner Anderson, the floor is yours. Please craft as you would like to see moving forward with some of the pieces that have been put before us now, so that we can put something that again, keeps the cart moving forward at 11:03 (p.m.).

Vice Mayor Mena: At least somebody on the committee, I would say from the Board of Architects.

Commissioner Anderson: Yes. I'm amenable to all that.

Vice Mayor Mena: Because it should be somebody who has the practical side of how things are currently working.

Commissioner Anderson: I do think all of them should be architects.

Mayor Lago: Right. Right – 100 percent.

Commissioner Anderson: And I do hope we can craft this and get this moving forward tonight.

City Attorney Ramos: So, the function of the board will just be the Med bonus at this point, and we can expand it later?

Commissioner Anderson: Yes, we can expand it later.

Mayor Lago: Would you like to make a motion on that?

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Commissioner Anderson: I would like to make a motion.

Mayor Lago: It's on the Blue-Ribbon Panel and then we'll move onto the issue of the moratorium.

Commissioner Anderson: Okay. Get the Blue-Ribbon Panel going, each one of us have an appointee that's an architect, we have the City Architect.

City Attorney Ramos: Who chooses the person from the Board of Architects, the Manager?

Commissioner Menendez: Yes, its streamlined.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: City Architect.

City Attorney Ramos: City Architect and a member of the Board of Architects.

Development Services Director Cabrera: A member of the Board of Architects, who is going to select that person.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: The City Architect or the Manager or his designee. He'll probably designate the City Architect.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Pardo do you recommend something?

Mr. Pardo: I would recommend Glenn Pratt. Glenn Pratt sits on the Board of Architects now, super seasoned, done many projects in the Gables, his offices are in the Gables.

Vice Mayor Mena: Glenn Pratt will be my appointee to the board.

[Laughter]

Commissioner Anderson: See, you got all that done in one shot.

City Attorney Ramos: A member of the BOA, we still have a seat to fill.

Commissioner Anderson: You still have a seat to fill though.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right. That will be my seat. I have no problem, is there any objection to that?

City Attorney Ramos: We still need a member of the Board of Architects.

Commissioner Menendez: Why don't we pick one as-a-Commission whole now, can we do that, as a Commission.

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City Attorney Ramos: Sure.

Commissioner Menendez: Pick the name and vote on it as part of the resolution.

City Attorney Ramos: Sure.

Commissioner Menendez: Felix we need, can we make this gentleman...

Commissioner Fors: This is the kind of stuff that happens at 11 p.m. You are going to throw me names of people who I don't know, and I've never met and I'm going to say yes or no. At least show me a photograph of the person, see if I recognize them.

Mr. Pardo: I would also nominate Little Wayne.

[Laughter]

Commissioner Menendez: So, we as a Commission can select the board member from the Board of Architects, the architect, so how do we do that Madam City Attorney?

City Attorney Ramos: Someone nominates someone and make the motion.

Commissioner Menendez: Before the resolution or after the resolution?

City Attorney Ramos: Probably after.

Commissioner Menendez: Okay. We'll be ready to do that.

Mayor Lago: So, you made a motion and I'll second it.

Commissioner Anderson: I did make a motion that we could each appoint our own. I'm not going to say your architect you chose is not qualified.

Commissioner Menendez: So, are we good?

City Attorney Ramos: I just want to say it to be clear. It's to create a Blue-Ribbon Committee for the purpose of only looking at the Mediterranean ordinance. It will have seven members, one will be the City Architect, one will be a member of the Board of Architects, which the Commission is going to chose as-a-whole tonight, and then each Commissioner will appoint one member and they all have to be architects.

Vice Mayor Mena: And we have to appoint them by Friday.

City Attorney Ramos: By Friday.

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Commissioner Anderson: By Friday, yes.

Mayor Lago: So, they can hopefully have their first meeting on Monday in the summer.

Commissioner Menendez: Oh, can it be by Zoom?

Mayor Lago: In person.

City Attorney Ramos: We are not having any Zoom board meetings.

Commissioner Menendez: I mean not us, but the Blue Ribbon.

City Attorney Ramos: None of the city boards are having Zoom meetings anymore.

Mayor Lago: So, is there a second on the floor?

Commissioner Menendez: I'll second.

Mayor Lago: Billy, Mr. Clerk.

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Okay. Now we move onto the next item.

City Clerk Urquia: Wait. Is there a motion to appoint the...?

City Attorney Ramos: You need to appoint someone from the Board of Architects.

Mayor Lago: That's what I'm working on. The next item will be the appointment of Mr. Glenn Pratt as the member at-large for the BOA.

Commissioner Menendez: I'll make the motion.

Commissioner Anderson: Second.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

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Mayor Lago: Yes
(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: So, moving on, the third item on the table is the final discussion on the moratorium and what are the plans from the sponsor, Commissioner Anderson.

Commissioner Anderson: Well, hearing from you all, you want to do it in 30-day clips, okay. Our next Commission meeting is on 8/24, we run it to that date. Any thoughts Mayor?

Mayor Lago: Listen, I have no problems. I came up with the 30-day clip.

Commissioner Anderson: Its roughly 30 days.

Commissioner Fors: Its more than 30 days.

Mayor Lago: That's fine. But there isn't anything coming before the Commission.

City Attorney Ramos: There is no Commission meeting.

Mayor Lago: No, I know. But there isn't anything, there is no project as per Ms. Cabrera, that is coming before...

Commissioner Anderson: That is coming before the Board of Architects, its coming before other boards, the process, so that's why there is the need.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I want to understand your policy direction on this very clearly, because either we stop the projects, or they continue through the process. Certainly, nobody is going to come before you before your next meeting.

Commissioner Anderson: Not us, but there is process before.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: But there is Board of Architects and there is Planning and Zoning. So, at the very least I have said that one big project that is very controversial, very difficult to deal with, would like to be, if they could, in the August Planning and Zoning, so that is happening.

Commissioner Anderson: I understand. So rather than have developers waste more money putting these projects together and I understand its one, hit the pause button till the 24th, let's see what we produce by the 24th of August, so that we have clear direction for staff, as well as the developers on how these projects should be designed.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Fors: If that project is going to be recommended now, they'd rather get denied sooner than later, right, so they can move on with their lives.

City Attorney Ramos: So, I just need to make a clarification. According to Section 142095, the Effective of Zoning in Progress Resolution. During the time period that the Planning and Zoning Board and City Commissioner considering a moratorium ordinance which is while Zoning in Progress is in place, no permit of development orders of any kind shall be issued, if it would result in a non-conforming or unlawful use of the subject property should the text be changed. So, I guess the point I'm trying to make is that I don't know that BOA approval or a Planning and Zoning approval qualifies as a permanent development order. So that will continue to move forward if the developer chooses. They could stop and say, I'm not going to spend any more money, but we can't stop them, I guess is what I'm saying, that it doesn't stop the reviews, it just stops development orders and permits. That makes sense.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes. Understood.

Commissioner Anderson: I'm going to still suggest that and move that we hit the pause button and do the Zip ordinance through the 24th of August. We'll be back here on the 24th of August and see what we have produced by then.

Mayor Lago: Anyone else, any comments?

Commissioner Fors: At this point I genuinely believe that whether we impose or hit the pause button from here until the next Commission meeting or don't makes no difference whatsoever.

Vice Mayor Mena: That's my problem.

Commissioner Fors: Kind of change the trajectory of the future or any project or anything like that.

Vice Mayor Mena: Feels like a bit of a hollow gesture to be honest with you, but it is what it is.

Commissioner Fors: It seems like theatrics a little bit on all our parts.

Vice Mayor Mena: Agreed.

Commissioner Fors: And at the same time, it doesn't matter. It just doesn't matter. We will be sitting here August whatever, August twenty-whatever with hopefully the Blue Ribbon having been put together and having some insight on where they are going by then. So, it doesn't really matter, but nothing is going to happen in the meantime.

Commissioner Anderson: Any other comments gentlemen?

Mayor Lago: I need a second on the floor.

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Vice Mayor Mena: I'll second it.

Mayor Lago: Okay. A second for discussion. In 30 days, we just heard from staff.

Vice Mayor Mena: It's a Zoning in Progress till August 24th, right.

Commissioner Fors: Let's say to the next Commission meeting.

Vice Mayor Mena: Which is August 24th.

Mayor Lago: We basically are in a position where we hope that we'll have as much input as possible from the Blue-Ribbon Panel and we'll be able to see some sort of possible options to implement a new process in regard to the approvals.

Commissioner Fors: And everybody here will make a personal commitment to appoint somebody to the Blue-Ribbon Panel by Friday.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: I already have a couple of names in mind, long time Coral Gables architects. I'm sure Felix knows. Felix will approve of them.

Vice Mayor Mena: Alright, let's call it.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)